

Please read the Dear Colleague and the attached appropriations letter. We hope you can give your support.

Help Prevent an Alzheimer's Explosion

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the 4.5 million Americans and their families who suffer from Alzheimer's disease, we are asking for your continued support of several ongoing federal research and public health initiatives that are helping people with Alzheimer's live better lives; and also preventing millions of additional Americans from suffering a similar fate.

As you know, we have made significant progress in the battle against Alzheimer's in recent years. Advances include more information as to possible causes of Alzheimer's and what people can do to possibly prevent developing Alzheimer's; and a recently approved FDA drug that could help slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease in moderately to severely ill patients. While our investments so far have paid off in major advances, we must keep the money flowing to stave off the Alzheimer's time bomb.

Leading researchers have indicated that in order for adequate research initiatives to be pursued aggressively, our government must invest \$1 billion annually in Alzheimer's research through the National Institutes of Health, particularly the National Institute on Aging (NIA). To achieve this goal, we ask that the committee increase the NIH's overall budget by at least \$250 million across the board to accommodate additional Alzheimer's research. Currently, only about 25 percent of meritorious research projects are funded, due simply to a lack of funds. By increasing the budget, we will help ensure that more meritorious projects – which have life-saving implications – are funded.

In addition to helping to spare countless Americans and their families from the ravages of Alzheimer's disease, making this investment now will help save our government billions of dollars in annual health care costs. During the next 10 years, it is estimated that Medicare costs associated with caring for Alzheimer's patients will increase to nearly \$50 billion annually. To prevent this massive increase in Medicare spending, we must redouble our commitment to research.

In addition to increasing funding for the NIH, we also request that the committee continue to fund other federal initiatives that provide critical care and support to Alzheimer's patients. Specifically, we are requesting:

- \$2.25 million to fully fund the Alzheimer's **Clinical Research and Training Program**, which works with physicians to improve diagnosis and treatments for Alzheimer's patients as well as preventative methods.

- \$25 million for the **Alzheimer's Matching Grant Program**, which helps states reach all families affected by Alzheimer's, especially families living in medically underserved areas, particularly rural and minority communities.
- \$900,000 for continued support of the **Alzheimer's Association Safe Return program**. Funded through the Department of Justice, Safe Return has helped safely reunite with their families more than 8,000 Alzheimer's patients who have wandered from their homes. Continued funding is needed to keep this 24-hour program in operation.

Additionally, we are asking for report language to urge the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to begin the work needed to develop an Alzheimer's prevention and education program under its existing Healthy Aging Program.

To help in the fight against Alzheimer's and to sign the letter to appropriators (copy on back), please contact either Michael Bailey with Rep. Markey at 5-2836 or Nick Manetto with Rep. Smith at 5-3765.

Sincerely,

EDWARD J. MARKEY
Member of Congress

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

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